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ED P. REYES
Councilmember, First District

October 9, 2009

MLPA Blue Ribbon Task Force
c/o California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Protections of Southern California's Coastal Ecosystem

Dear Blue Ribbon Task Force members:

As Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee for the Los Angeles River in the City of Los Angeles, I am committed to ensuring the future health and vitality of our coast. I strongly support the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA) process and the establishment of a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) along the southern California coast.

The health of the coastal ocean is important to all of Los Angeles, not just those who live on the coast. Not only do millions of Los Angeles residents visit the beaches and coastline each year to enjoy seeing marine wildlife, but many of the anglers who subsistence fish from the public piers travel long distances from areas throughout Los Angeles County. The ocean is a public resource that is important for everyone, and therefore, it is important for us all to voice our support for its protection.

As you recommended at your last meeting in July, a strong backbone of marine reserves which **thoroughly meet all the science guidelines** provided by the Science Advisory Team is critical for the success of an MPA network and for the protection of southern California's coastal ecosystem. Such protections will not only protect what is left of precious ecosystems, but it will also keep our region's fishing industry sustainable for future generations. In a state where our economic activity is largely fueled by the health of our coastal resources, it is vital we invest in the future of our ocean.

While I understand the value of designating places like Upper Newport Bay, Mugu Lagoon, Point Dume, Bolsa Chica, Palos Verdes, La Jolla, as critical nurseries, breeding grounds and high quality habitat for southern California's marine life, we must also have the vision to do the same for those areas that are less visible such as the Los Angeles River estuary. The LA River estuary is a 2.6 mile soft bottom stretch of the river between the Willow Street Bridge to Queensway Bay in Long Beach. As you know, estuaries are among the most productive ecosystems on earth, creating valuable organic matter each year. Thousands of species of birds, mammals, fish, and other wildlife depend on estuarine habitats as places to live, feed, and reproduce. They are often called the nurseries of the seas. Ours is at risk.

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I would like to express my strong support for adding the Los Angeles River Estuary to your list of proposed marine conservation areas. In addition, after careful review, I would also like express my support for **Map 3** as it is the only map which adequately protects the critical areas and high quality habitats necessary to ensure that fisheries can recover and be healthy for generations to come. This map ultimately helps the LA River and gives us further reason to clean the river so when it dumps into Long Beach (one of the protected areas) more fish species are able to flourish.

Finally, our coastline serves as an educational opportunity, open space, and a connection to nature for many underserved communities who have a strong vested interest in long-term protection of our coast but a limited opportunity to engage in the MLPA process. I urge you to seek ways to engage the support and input of California's diverse residents, and as educational programs are implemented for MLPA, you reach out to all segments of communities from coastal areas to urban centers of our cities.

Thank you very much for all your hard work in ensuring the protection of Southern California's marine life.

Sincerely,



ED P. REYES

Chair, Ad Hoc Committee for the Los Angeles River

CC

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